

Message Text

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14

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TCSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1069

INFO AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 5043

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJ: JRA TERRORISTS

REF: STATE 197043

1. FOLLOWING RECEIPT REFTEL, I CALLED ON FONMIN
DEPUTY SECGEN ZAKARIA AUGUST 22 TO MAKE PRESENTATION OF
OUR POSITION RE RECENT TERRORISM INCIDENT IN K.L. I
TOLD ZAKARIA THAT EFFORTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY
TO CURTAIL AND EVENTUALLY ELIMINATE TERRORISM HEAVILY
DEPENDENT ON TWO FACTORS: APPREHENSION AND PUNISHMENT OF
TERRORISTS FOLLOWING ACTS; AND DENIAL OF SAFE HAVEN. I
THEN MADE POINTS CONTAINED IN SUBPARAS A, B, C AND D,
PARA 3 REFTEL, AND ENDED BY HANDING ZAKARIA AIDE MEMOIRE
CONTAINING THOSE POINTS.

2. ZAKARIA SAID HE UNDERSTOOD USG'S POINT OF VIEW
(THIS IS FAMILIAR GROUND TO ZAKARIA BECAUSE OF OUR
PREVIOUS CONVERSATIONS) BUT THAT HE WOULD CAREFULLY
CONVEY POINTS I HAD MADE TO HIS SUPERIORS. HE WISHED,
HOWEVER, TO MAKE A PRELIMINARY RESPONSE;

A. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGAINST TERRORISM
MUST START WITH MAKING ACTS OF TERRORISM MORE DIFFICULT.
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THEREFORE, HIS GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING

ITS SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AND PARTICULARLY ITS CONTROLS ON INTERNATIONAL TRAVELERS. AT THE PRESENT MOMENT THERE WERE PLANS UNDERWAY WHICH WOULD MAKE TRAVEL BY TERRORISTS, AND TRANSPORT OF GUNS AND EXPLOSIVES, MORE DIFFICULT.

B. THE GOM COULD NOT AGREE THAT A RIGID NO-SAFE-HAVEN RULE WAS A VALID APPROACH. ONCE TERRORISTS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY SEIZED HOSTAGES IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO STAND ON PRINCIPLE. THEREFORE, DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES OR INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS ENUNCIATING SUCH PRINCIPLES WERE NOT USEFUL BECAUSE THEY COULD NOT BE MAINTAINED.

C. IN THIS CASE, LARG HAD DONE A FAVOR IN GOM TIME OF NEED. GOM WAS CONVINCED THAT LARG DID NOT WISH TO ACCEPT TERRORISTS AND HAD DONE IT OUT OF FRIENDSHIP FOR GOM, AND IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE OF MIN HOME AFFAIRS GHAZALI SHAFIE'S PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH AL-OBEIDI. THEREFORE, ALTHOUGH ZAKARIA WOULD PRESENT USG'S VIEWS AT HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, IT WAS CERTAIN THAT GOM WOULD NOT WISH TO APPROACH LARG ABOUT PUNISHMENT OF TERRORISTS - A SUBJECT THAT WOULD EMBARRASS LARG. FURTHERMORE, IT WAS OPINION OF GOM THAT CONTINUED INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF LIBYANS WOULD ONLY MAKE THEM MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH.

3. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD GOM POINT OF VIEW AND WOULD REPORT IT TO MY GOVERNMENT. I THEN INQUIRED WHETHER GOM RELUCTANCE TO TALK ABOUT PUNISHMENT OF JRA TERRORISTS WITH LARG EXTENDED TO RELUCTANCE TO ASK FOR RETURN OF STOLEN PROPERTY. I POINTED OUT THAT IN ADDITION TO AMERICAN, BRITISH, BRUNEIAN, FRENCH AND ROC PASSPORTS WHICH HAD BEEN STOLEN, THERE WERE FIVE MALAYSIAN PASSPORTS INCLUDING A DIPLOMATIC ONE BELONGING TO TENGKU RAZALEIGH. ZAKARIA DID NOT KNOW PRECISELY WHAT STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN REGARD TO THE STOLEN PROPERTY BUT SEEMED TO FIND THE SUGGESTION REASONABLE THAT THE GOM SHOULD TAKE STEPS TO RECOVER IT. HE PROMISED TO LET ME KNOW GOM DECISION.

4. I ALSO HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE UP SUBJECT OF
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GOM FOLLOW-UP OF TERRORISM INCIDENT INFORMALLY WITH MIN HOME AFFAIRS GHAZALIE SHAFIE, TO WHOM I MADE APPROXIMATELY THE SAME POINTS. GHAZALIE REPLIED ALONG THE SAME LINES AS ZAKARIA WITH SINGLE IMPORTANT EXCEPTION. GHAZALIE ALSO STRESSED CONCERN OF GOM WITH RETALIATION AGAINST ITS MANY SMALL EMBASSIES ABROAD, NOTING THAT THEY WERE LITERALLY WITHOUT PROTECTION AND VULNERABLE. THEREFORE, IN HIS VIEW, ALTHOUGH HE AGREED

WITH USG POSITION "IN PRINCIPLE", IT WAS NECESSARY THAT
GOM BE CIRCUMSPECT IN DEALING WITH PROBLEM IN ORDER
TO AVOID LEAVING ITS AMBASSADORS OPEN TO RETALIATION.
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